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ABSTRACT

The intent of the project described in this article is to assess needed competencies in developing and administering community education programs. The primary goal of the project is to determine the specific skills and related competencies needed by administrators of community education programs. Sixty-eight Arizona administrators, including community school directors, school district superintendents, building principals, and district community education coordinators, are participating in the assessment project, which will be completed in the late spring, 1977. The final results should indicate which skills and competencies are given high or low priority in ideal terms, as well as which ones in practice are considered important or unimportant. The results should be of use in program evaluation, certification, and preservice and inservice training. This article also lists the elements and components of a fully implemented community education program. (Author/DS)

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A PROJECT TO ASSESS NEEDED COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Brian Miller, Arizona State University

(The Southwest Regional Center for Community Education Development at Arizona State University has been awarded a USOE grant to assess needed competencies in developing and administering Community Education programs. The funding is being made available through the Community Education Act of 1974. The primary thrust of this competency assessment project is to determine the specific skills and related competencies administrators of Community Education programs need to be effective leaders. --Ed.)

Community Education programs have grown rapidly in the past decade. Presently, there are approximately 3,500 Community Education programs, and approximately 1,800 Community Education directors and coordinators in the United States. Although there is considerable data in the literature on needed competencies in school administration, little work has been directed at determining what skills are germane to those engaged specifically in the administration of Community Education programs. Questions remain unanswered regarding needed competencies in Community Education administration in terms of the roles of superintendent, district coordinator, principal, and building level coordinator.

The Concept of Community Education

An examination of the following statement on Community Education, issued by the Arizona Department of Education Task Force in 1976, is indicative of the broad scope of tasks met and competencies needed by administrators of Community Education programs.

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"The purpose of the community school is the involvement of people in the development of an educationally-oriented community. Ideally, the community school serves the purposes of academic and skill development for youth and adults; it furnishes meeting places for community groups; and it provides facilities for the dissemination of a variety of services, thus making life-long learning opportunity a reality.

The cornerstone of Community Education is increased community involvement and participation in the educational offerings of the local school. The community school responds to the self-defined needs of the total community and is based upon the belief that, given the opportunity to make fuller use of their schools, people will work together to improve those schools."

The increased scope and breadth of competencies needed in the administration of community education programs is further illustrated by the elements and components of a fully implemented program, also stated by the 1976 Task Force in the March, 1976, position paper:

Element: Educational Institutional Involvement

1. Position Paper: A position paper should be adopted by the governing board of the institution during the early stages of planning for a community education program. The position paper would address the degree of commitment of the educational institution, and provide the basic philosophy of the program.

2. Policies: The governing board of the institution should adopt policies supportive of the community education program. Examples of policy topics which the governing board might consider are uses of facilities and equipment, hours of program operation, and fiscal support.

3. Support: The sources and extent of institutional fiscal support should be clearly established for use by those charged with the primary responsibility for administering the community education program.

4. Administrative Structure: The primary administrator of the institution should define the relationship of community education in the administrative structure.

5. Administrative Leadership: Administrative leadership responsibilities for community education should be incorporated into an appropriate administrative job description.

6. Staff Involvement: The institutional staff's responsibilities toward community education should be addressed and clearly defined.

7. Feedback Procedure: A system should be established to provide the data needed to make infomred program decisions.

Element: Community to be Served

Community Education should serve the total educational needs of the community.

8. Geographic Boundary: The physical boundaries of the geographic area which the program is designed to serve should be designated.

9. Demographic Study: The populations which exist in the community should be described on the basis of factors such as age, sex, ethnic heritage, standard of living, and education.

10. Special Groups: Many special groups exist and should be identified so that their needs can be addressed. These include but are not limited to: the handicapped, the illiterate, the non-English speaking, the unemployed, the widowed, the gifted, those seeking job upgrading, etc.

Element: Community Education Council

The purpose of the council is to provide for the active and continuous involvement of individuals, groups, and institutions broadly representative of the community served.

11. Composition: Membership should reflect a cross-section of all segments of the population of the community served, including representatives of agencies, business and industry, education, and the community-at-large. A set of by-laws or a written agreement with the board of education is essential.

12. Functions

The functions of a Community Education Council are:

: To identify and analyze community concerns.

: To advise and recommend program activities and services.

: To assist with program tasks such as disseminating program information, locating resources, registration, screening personnel, etc.

: To review program results as related to identified community concerns.

Element: Community Needs

13. Identification: The program should provide a systematic procedure for identifying community needs, interests, and concerns. The method should include a procedure for obtaining information from institutions, groups, and individuals such as educational institutions, social, recreational, health and business/industry groups, and individuals broadly representative of the community served.

14. Communication: The program would provide an effective method for communicating the information on community needs, interests, and concerns to key decision makers and to the public at large.

15. Evaluation: The program should provide a method for obtaining and reporting the information required to determine if the program activities and services are effectively addressing the identified community needs.

Element: Interagency Cooperation

Community Education should promote, encourage, and facilitate interagency cooperation. Through this coordination and cooperation the programs and services

available in the community can be focused on the identified needs. The ultimate goal of interagency cooperation is to increase and improve services to the community.

16. Coordinating Council: The purpose of this council is to bring together the community agencies, educational institutions, and organizations providing services in the community education program to facilitate cooperation. Some of the council's functions are: 1) to discuss matters relating to the joint operation and coordination of the program, 2) to encourage member agencies and organizations to formulate their own policies and guidelines in relation to the community education program, 3) to identify and resolve areas of concern.

17. Joint Use Agreements: Joint Use Agreements are formal written documents between cooperating agencies and institutions relating to the use of resources. The agreements describe details of intent, insurance, liability, program, facility and equipment use, etc.

18. Public Relations: Joint public relations efforts should be established to publicize the community education program, agency services and community resources.

19. Cooperative Facility Planning: Public facilities should be jointly planned to reduce cost, avoid duplication and maximize use. Further, community education encourages agency/organization facilities to be cooperatively planned.

20. Joint Funding: Community education should enable and encourage joint funding of program activities and services.

Element: Identification of Community Resources

21. Physical: Physical resources including: buildings, land, and equipment that might be utilized in the program.

22. Fiscal: Fiscal resources including: budget allocations, fees, donations, grants, etc., which could be used in the program process of community education.

23. Human: Human resources including: school, agency, business, organization personnel, and community members.

24. Services: Services resources including: social, health, recreational, cultural, enrichment, educational, which exist in the community.

Element: Public Facility as a Community Education Center

25. Primary Facility: Program services for the community should be concentrated in a specific public facility. Program should provide access to public school facilities.

26. Satellite Facility: Satellite or mobile facilities may be used by the center for a portion of the program activities and services. These facilities may be non-public.

Element: Scope of Activities and Services

27. Basic Community Education Program Activities: Community education program activities are based upon the needs identified in each community. A balanced program contains such activities as: enrichment courses, recreation and leisure activities, vocational training, socially oriented activities, cultural events, and academic skills development.

28. Basic Community Education Program Services: The basic community education program should make provisions for social and health agencies to provide services in the community education facilities.

29. Topics of Contemporary Interest and Future Concern: Community education should provide for the awareness, discussion, and analysis of topics of contemporary interest and future concern such as: multi-cultural appreciation, preparation for technical change, futurism, the political process, current issues, environmental awareness, and consumer protection.

Plan of the Project

Sixty-eight administrators, representing 17 school districts in Arizona, participated in the study. From each of these 17 districts, a team of four or more administrators of Community Education programs were invited to participate as a team. These teams were composed of the superintendent of the school district, the district Community Education coordinator, a building principal, and a building level director.

The four aforementioned classifications of Community Education administrators were homogeneously grouped and then subdivided into sub-groups of approximately eight in number. With the aid of a process facilitator, group leader, and recorder, each group of eight developed a list of critical tasks and competencies needed in the development and administration of Community Education programs. After consensus was reached in the subgroup, the groups met and consolidated their work, based upon the perceptions of the total group--statements were consolidated, omissions identified, and some editing completed.

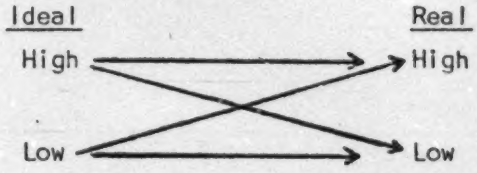
Phase II

Following the first workshop activity, the lists of competencies were submitted to review using a panel method. These panels consisted of four administrators from each of the four roles of Community Education administrators. This activity in Workshop No. 2 provided a final consolidation and editing of the competency statements. Subsequent to the "fine-tuning" function each of the original 68 administrator participants will be asked to rate the competency statements using three scales: importance, level of competence needed, and where the competency is typically attained.

Ratings will be obtained through a mail survey, the data collected will be subjected to the Quadrant Assessment Model (QAM)* program to determine if each statement is of high or low priority in the "ideal" for each role and in the "actual" for each respondent. The Quadrant Assessment Model is designed to

*Quadrant Assessment Model (QAM) for the Assessment of Competencies, by Gaston Pol and Lloyd McCleary, Notebook.

to compare perceptions in a logical way. The Model can be shown in schematic form:



For each sub-group of the sample an Index of Importance is determined by a ranking of mean scores of each competency statement. An Index of Consensus is determined by use of the standard deviation of the response scores for each competency statement. Using both indices, a set of competencies rated High Ideal, Low Ideal, High Real and Low Real were determined as judged by each group of the sample. A W-correlation of Concordance is used to screen statements within each of the four categories--this procedure is described here, but it permits the identification of degree of agreement among subgroups for the placement of statements in a particular category.

Four sets of relationships are considered useful and these are indicated in a particular category.

High Ideal - High Real statements are assumed to mean that the competency implied by the statement is important and that practitioners do, in fact, possess that competency. Therefore, it seems logical to infer that competencies rated in the High Ideal-High Real quadrant need to be given high priority in the planning of pre-service programs.

High Ideal - Low Real statements will be assumed to mean that the competency implied by the statement is important and that practitioners generally do not possess that competency. Therefore, it seems logical to infer that competencies rated in the High Ideal-Low Real quadrant need to be given high priority in the in-service education of administrators and that consideration should be given to them in planning pre-service programs.

Low Ideal - High Real statements will be assumed to mean that the competencies implied are of low importance but were likely to be over-emphasized in practice. Therefore, it seems logical to infer that these competencies should be given low priority in the in-service education of administrators and that programs of training should be examined in terms of the emphasis given them.

Low Real - Low Ideal statements are assumed to mean that the competencies implied are of little importance and were not being overemphasized by the practitioner.

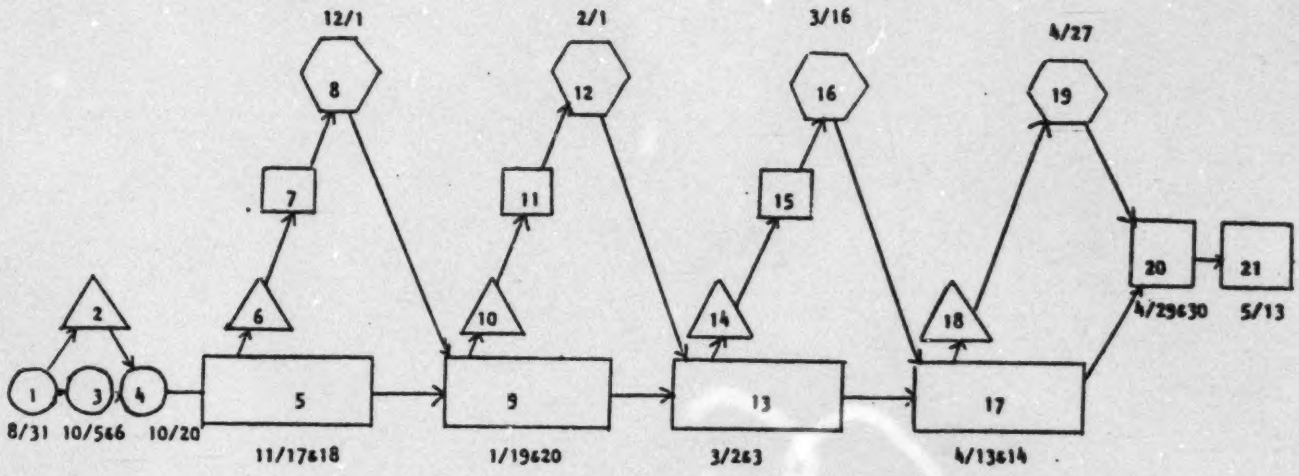
Phase III Workshop

In April of 1977, all 68 participants will reconvene to examine the product of their work and complete a self-assessment instrument. A final evaluation of the instrument will follow the self-assessment exercise. During this third workshop, participants will also be requested to (1) assign indicators to the competency statements and (2) generate plans for future developmental work.

Final Activities

A final evaluation of this instrument will then be conducted by Arizona

PROJECT FLOW CHART



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	PLACE	SESSIONS	PARTICIPANTS
August 31	First Planning Session	ASU Farmer Bldg., Rm. 415	2:00-4:00	10
October 5,6	Second Planning Session	ASU Farmer Bldg., Rm. 415	7-10:00 p.m. 8-5:00	6
October 20	Third Planning Session Mailing of Invitations	ASU Farmer Bldg., Rm. 415	10:00-12:00	5
Nov. 17,18	First Workshop	Casa Blanca Inn	1:30-9:30 8:30-4:00	68
Dec. 1	Mailing of Proceedings of first workshop	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jan. 19,20	Second Workshop	Sunburst Hotel	1:30-9:30 8:30-4:00	25
February 1	Mailing of Proceedings of second workshop	n/a	n/a	n/a
March 2,3	Third Workshop	Site to be announced	1:30-9:30 8:30-4:00	68
March 16	Mailing of Proceedings of third workshop	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 13,14	Fourth Workshop	Site to be announced		
April 27	Mailing of final document of competencies needed in Community Education	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 29,30	Final Evaluation of Grant			
May 13	Mailing of Evaluation	n/a	n/a	na/

epartment of Education personnel and university personnel from the University of Utah and Arizona State University in a fourth and final session. The main thrust of this session will be to generate a final project report.

Significance of the Study

Aside from the overt benefit of causing some 68 schools administrators to reflect deeply on what they are about in their work, there are some important implications for this work that are of interest to the practitioner and administrator alike.

Assessment Function: It is only as we ascertain where we are that we might move forward in sophisticaion and effectiveness as community school administrators. Because the various descriptions of Community Education administrative positions are relatively new, we have, as yet, little to aid administrators of Community Education programs in knowing when they are on productive courses and involved in meaningful tasks in their work. The data from this effort will provide both empirical evidence and a procedure to clarify roles and permit meaningful evaluation of performance.

Certification: The exciting possibility exists that state certification requirements for administrators of Community Education programs (undeveloped to date) can be based on a competency assessment model, versus the traditional method of credentialing. Using this model, administrators of Community Education programs could be licensed, based on real and measurable skills, as opposed to evidence of courses taken that may or may not reflect the acquisition of needed competencies.

Program Evaluation Function: Additionally, an outgrowth of this project is the development of procedures that will permit the examination of relationships between administrative performance and program output variables, such as student achievement and school climate.

College Curriculum Function: Finally, the Community Education trainers who formally participate in the C. S. Mott Foundation Community Education network in the United States will benefit from the study. The data derived from this study, and future work, will allow these and other institutions of higher learning to modify instructional strategies so that they speak to the development of needed competencies in Community Education. This is worthwhile outcome for those engaged in the preparation of administrators of Community Education programs.

Summary: The Arizona State University Competencies Assessment Project promises to be of interest to scholars and practitioners alike. As the project moves toward more rational training and evaluation models, data such as that provided by this project will be essential. As final results become available in late spring of 1977, the Southwest Regional Center, through a final report in the Notebook and upon private request, will make those results available.

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